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2 February 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

SUBJECT: Debriefing of Edward G. Tichborn(P)

1. Edward G.Tichborn(P) arrived in Washington from his trip to Cuba during the night of 31 January 1960/. He was debriefed at the Hotel Statler from about 1000 to 1530 hours on 1 February. Those present at the debriefing were Messrs. Phil Toomey and Charles Penney from WH Division, Mr. Alexander Hunter PP/EAD, and the Undersigned. This debriefing was very interesting and resulted in a good deal of pertinent information. The three and a half reels of tape derived therefrom are now being transcribed by this office. Some of the more salient points are noted below.

2. Some of the operational information and suggestions offered by Tichborn are the following:

a. There appears to be little chance of a coalition of the opposition groups at this time or in the near future since they are not well organized and each group would want to be the leader of such an effort. Also, according to the members of the opposition to whom Tichborn talked, it is the general consensus of opinion that Fidel Castro is in no danger of loosing his grip or the devotion of his followers for some time to come.

b. Fidel Castro seems to become most upset and almost paniced by defections. Possessing a "Messiah-type complex" he cannot bear the thought of someone leaving the fold. Rather than to let such defections pass on unnoticed, he feels compelled to give reasons and make excuses. This then blows the matter up perhaps out of proportion and quickly becomes a matter of public knowledge. Tichborn feels that the inducement of defections could perhaps have more effect on Castro than any other single, rational action we might undertake.

c. There appears to be a relatively long-standing schism between the brothers Fidel and Raoul Castro. Raoul is the more cold individual. As an example, Fidel once ordered some 400 prisoners to be returned safely to their homes, but Raoul had a number of them killed. The general feeling in Cuba is that Fidel is not a Communist, but that Raoul is undoubtedly at least a fellow-traveller. Developing or exploiting this schism could therefore, be operationally advantageous. (The fact that they are brothers would probably have little effect on Fidel who has already reduced the land holdings of his mother and another brother in conformity with the agrarian reform program and who jailed his sister, and fired a Minister, over a shake-down on an insurance deal.)

3. Of special operational interest were several individuals Tichborn mentioned who might have some influence on Fidel Castro and hence might be of

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operational interest. They are:

a. Father(Padre) Alberto de Castro: he is a Jesuit priest presently located in Caracas, Venezuela, who had been a teacher of Fidel Castro during his youth. Castro was in Venezuela and saw Father de Castro there during which time the latter criticized Fidel for some of his actions. In spite of the fact that this remonstration occured in front of some of Fidel's men, the latter treated him with great respect. It was felt by Tichborn's source of this information, and by Tichborn, that Father de Castro undoubted has some influence over Castro. Tichborn suggested that it would be of value to determine whether or not Fidel has any regular contact with Father de Castro and if so, what operational potential he might have.

and they later chatted alone for an hour.

b. Herb Mathews: he is a journalist with the N.Y.Times and was the only American newspaperman covering the Castro story prior to his final success. While Tichborn was in Cuba, a front page article ~~px~~ appeared in Revolucion (the regime's press spokesman) on Mathews. It was a sort of editorial and praised Mathews as a "real man" and one who understood the revolution and its aims. Tichborn feels that it might be to our advantage to get into contact with Mathews since he appears to have the confidence of the administration.

c. Professor José Rosco: Subject is on the faculty of the Universidad de Villanueva and is a contemporary of Fidel Castro. They were classmates and both were debators although according to Rosco, Castro did not make the Debating Society of which he(Rosco) was the presidentOnce after the revolution, Rosco attended a speech Castro made and after the oration, the latter asked Rosco what he thought of it. Upon hearing some criticism, he wanted to know how it could have been improved. Since Castro was leaving for Venezuela and the United States he asked Rosco to accompany him in order that they could discuss the matter further. Tichborn feels that Rosco (a member of the opposition) ~~hxx~~ probably has more influence on Castro than Rosco realizes and that this possibility would be worth looking into.

d. Edward R.Murrow: he produced a TV program on Castro and Tichborn feels that he might have established a rapport with Castro during this period.

4. One of the contacts Tichborn made in Cuba (the Director of Tourism) asked him if he knew of anyone who would be interested in coming to Cuba on an all-expenses-paid visit in order to write articles (or other similar propaganda) on present day Cuba. Tichborn mentioned Clete Roberts, a popular radio and TV commentator in Los Angeles as a possible candidate. (Tichborn also discussed this matter with Horace W. Davis.) Tichborn will mention this possibility to Roberts upon his return to California.

5. While in Cuba, Tichborn accidently met a young lady who later revealed to him that she was "an agent for the State Department". He felt that this was a security matter and that it should be brought to our attention for that purpose. Mr. (Toomey) did not recognize the name; it is being further checked out with WH Division. The incident and the details will be made the subject of a separate memorandum for CI Staff.

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6. On the administrative side, Mr. Tichborn will forward by mail his financial accounting, one copy to the cover company and the other to Henry W. Darkin(P). The cover letter which was provided him in the event that he came to the attention of the Cuban authorities was returned to us and is now in his file. (There was no necessity for its use.) Tichborn inquired as to the possibility of receiving reimbursement for medical expenses which will undoubtedly be incurred upon his return to California due to a possible hernia which developed in New York on his return trip en route to Washington. This is being checked out by this office. Tichborn departed for Los Angeles (having been taken to Friendship International Airport by ~~Henry W. Darkin~~) at about 1800 hours on 1 February 1960.

Evalena S. Vidal